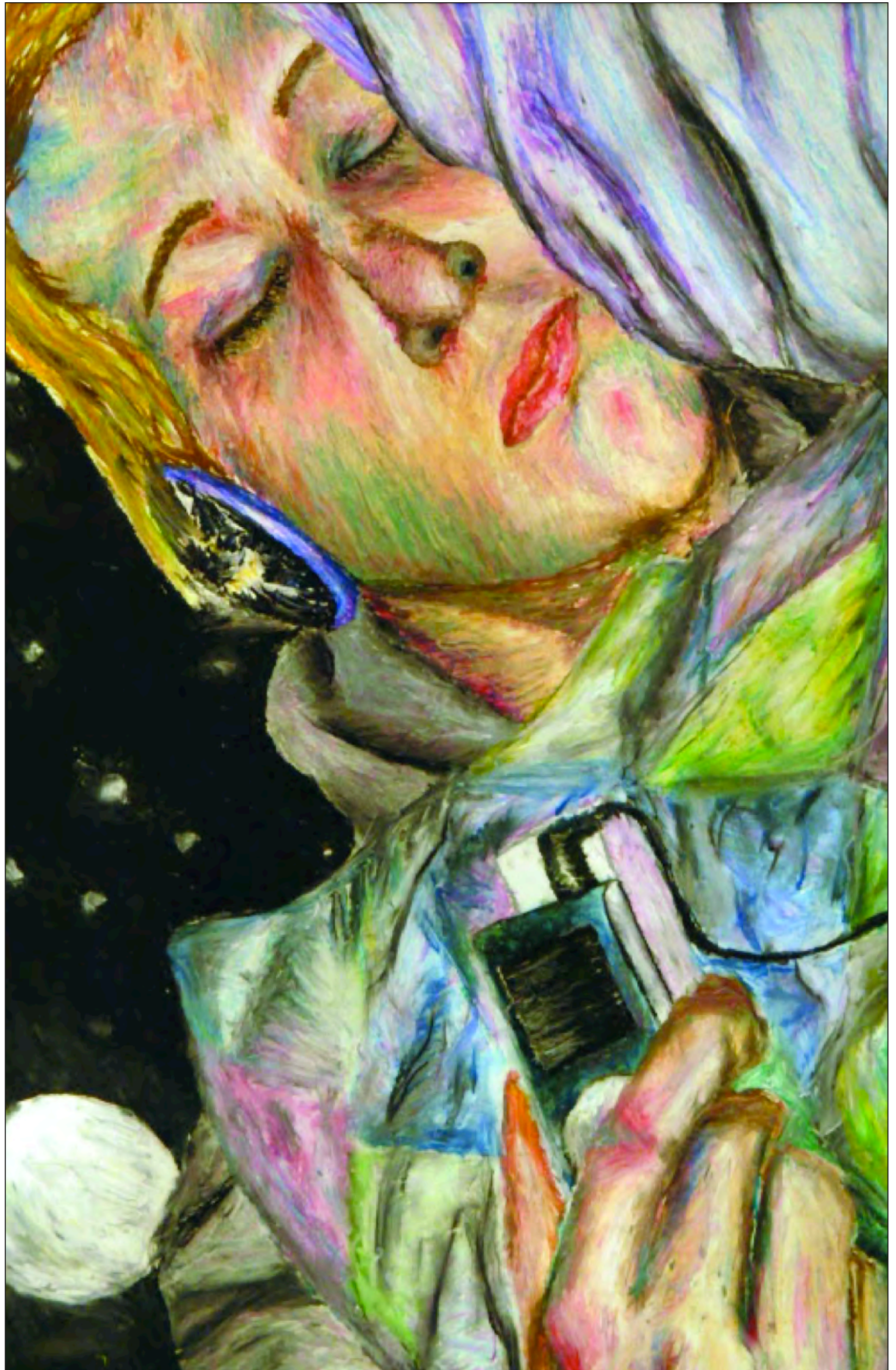


BREAKING GROUND

THE TENNESSEE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES



ANNUAL ARTS ISSUE

NUMBER 32 | SEPTEMBER 2006

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TENNESSEE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



FLY FISHERMAN

By Bennette A. Rowan

Bennette Rowan works as a full time studio artist in Johnson City, creating original oil paintings and teaching.

THE RAIN TREE

By Jason Jones

Jason Jones is from Greeneville. He has recently begun to explore photography. His art has been shown at the local library, and contemporary acrylic paintings are his specialty.



COVER ART: SWEET DREAMS

By Clair Christofersen

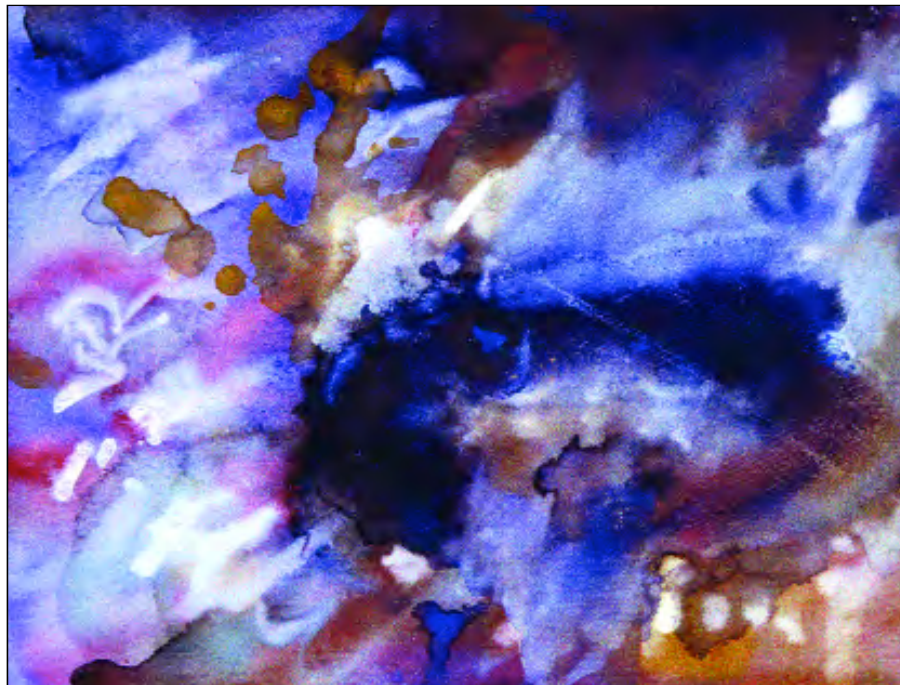
Nashville, De'VIA Youth Competition.

The Council gratefully acknowledges the full color sponsorship of this issue by the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development.

BLUE WIND

By Jerry Adams

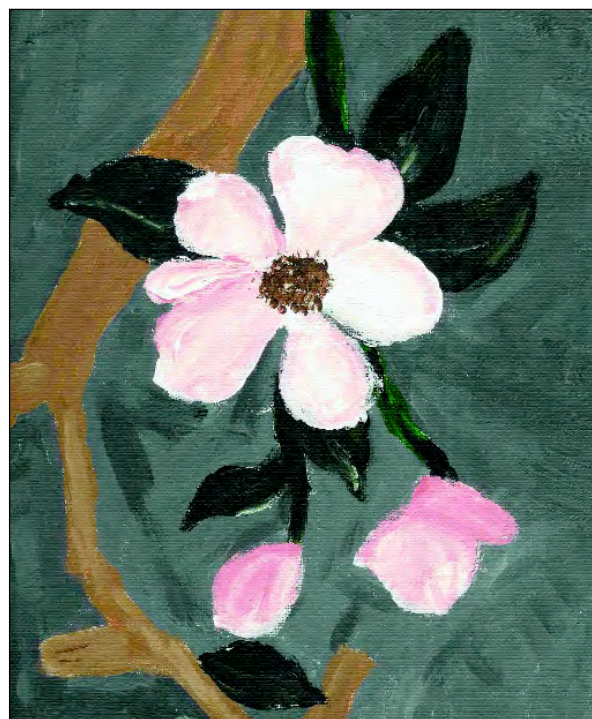
Jerry Adams lives in Pleasant View, where he enjoys painting outdoors and attending art shows. Mr. Adams works in broad, sweeping strokes, first layering and then blending colors to create dreamscape images with depth and motion.



SNOWMAN

By Aaron Hiscutt

Aaron Hiscutt is a nine-year-old 3rd grader at Miller Perry Elementary School in Kingsport. Born with CHARGE Syndrome, a deaf-blind disability, Mr. Hiscutt loves to draw and uses drawing as a means to communicate.



MAGNOLIAS IN BLOOM

By Lois Richards

Lois Richards is from Greeneville, where, seven years ago, she began art classes at the Senior Citizen Center. Although she has dabbled in watercolors, her preferred medium is oil painting.

DE'VIA ART EXHIBIT

BRINGS DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING ARTISTS TO A WIDER AUDIENCE BY SHARON LIMPUS

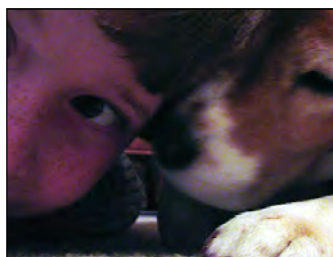
Deaf and hard-of-hearing artists – both professional and amateur – from across the United States were featured in an art competition in Nashville, considered to be the only one of its kind in the country. The Second Annual National Juried De'VIA (Deaf View/Image Art) Exhibit targeted adult artists nationwide who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have a strong connection with the deaf community, such as family members or interpreters. A separate statewide De'VIA Youth Competition was held also.

De'VIA is a genre characterized by an artist's creative expression of the deaf community and their own cultural understanding. "The art was amazing and an excellent representation of the De'VIA theme for both the adult and youth divisions," said Karin Kalodimos, an interpreter in Nashville, who was a returning event co-chair, along with Cynthia Weitzel, a deaf businesswoman and a former Franklin resident.

The juried De'VIA exhibit highlighted art from 16 artists representing nine states, including Tennessee. Finalists were chosen by an international panel of judges. The 2006 Youth Competition showcased fine arts from 19 Tennessee youth selected by a panel of Nashville judges.

The events were organized by the League for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Nashville. The League is the sole provider of qualified, comprehensive services to the deaf and hard of hearing in Middle Tennessee and parts of Southern Kentucky. MCI Global Relay-Tennessee Relay Service was the main Event Sponsor. Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Department of Cultural Enrichment was the Exhibit Sponsor.

Tennessee artists Gina Helms from Ashland City and Ken McBroom of Seymour were among the finalists in the adult competition. Ms. Helms, who became deaf in infancy, was one of three deaf children born to deaf parents. She is a graduate of the Kansas State School for the Deaf in Olathe, Kansas, and Rochester Institute of Technology, where she received a bachelor's of Fine Arts in Medical Illustration.



Mr. McBroom lost his hearing at age 19 while serving in Viet Nam. He was a paratrooper in the U.S. Army's Elite 101st Airborne Division's Recondos. Mr. McBroom was critically wounded during a mortar attack. When he came out of a year-long coma "with a fist-sized hole" in his skull, he was deaf, and his left side paralyzed.

Doctors didn't believe he would ever walk or talk again. Mr. McBroom earned a bachelor's degree in psychological social work and statistics from Gallaudet University; a master's degree in counseling and statistics from the University of Tennessee; and, an associate's degree in art and design from Pellissippi State. He is currently studying art and design at UT-Knoxville.

One selection, "Applause" by nine-year-old Matt Klytta of Old Hickory, was used for the League's 20th Anniversary T-shirts for its Better Hearing and Speech Month Picnic.

Catalogs featuring the art are available by calling the League, 615-248-8828 (V/TTY) or visiting www.leagueforthe deaf.com. For more information, please contact Sharon Limpus, 615-599-0080 (home office)/615-554-9938 (cell) or sharon.limpus@comcast.net.

Sharon Limpus provides marketing, communications and public relations services for the League for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, which is based in Nashville and has satellite offices in Franklin and Clarksville.

LEFT: MY EYE INSIDE NATURE

By Necoas Wilson
Knoxville, De'VIA Youth Competition.

RIGHT: DUO WITH SOLO

By Ryan Limpus
Franklin, De'VIA Youth Competition.

ESTABLISHING A COMMON GROUND

BY COURTNEY EVANS
AND ELISE MCMILLAN

Music, painting, dancing and a creative spirit were all part of the Common Ground Art Workshop and Exhibit at Nashville's Vanderbilt Kennedy Center this Spring. More than 50 artists, with and without disabilities, ranging in age from 10 to 70 participated in the four workshops and the four-month exhibit.



PARTICIPATING ARTISTS RACHEL PUTNAM (LEFT) AND JEANNE GAVIGAN ENJOY RHYTHM TIME.

The workshops and exhibit, which can be viewed online at kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/art/art0406/, were facilitated by Full Circle Art, and its leaders Massood Taj and Yvette Renee.

The Franklin-based Full Circle Art group is made up of visual, music and spoken/written word artists with a common goal to bring humanity closer. The artists do this by communicating through forms of expression that transcend cultural, geographic and language barriers. More information about Full Circle Art can be found at the Web site fullcircleart.org.

In the workshops, the participants first invited and engaged the artistic muse through drumming and movement. They then carried out the Full Circle Art mission "to communicate a shared vision of peace, love, and hope" with paint brushes and canvases, ceramics, and stained glass.

The result is a colorful and energetic display of shared common ground between the Full Circle artists and youth and adults with developmental disabilities.

Participating artists included Sean Druffel, Jeanne Gavigan, Grace Goad, Cate McMillan, Elise McMillan, Will McMillan, Edward Nesbitt, Jonathan Phillippi, Rachel Putnam, Ned Solomon, Mary Jane Swaney and a number of artists from Full Circle Art. Additionally, one of the workshops included students from Vanderbilt University's Best Buddies Chapter along with their buddies from the Nashville community.

"For the Common Ground workshops, we intended at best to make a connection and perhaps facilitate interaction through

collaborative work between Vanderbilt Kennedy Center artists and Full Circle Art artists," said Mr. Taj. "The common ground that exists among all humans, regardless of what keeps us separated on the outside, is the unquestionable internal dialogue that art and music can produce in all of us.



SEAN DRUFFEL (LEFT) AND WILL MCMILLAN WORK ON AN ART PROJECT.

"This fact is perhaps especially significant in those of us that, for any number of reasons, have limited social contact or interaction with the rest of the world, and, as working artists, we relate. Not only did we connect in the workshops by way of rhythms, the visual work that came out of the workshops was beyond any of our expectations."

The workshops were made possible by an Arts Build Communities Grant from the Metro Nashville Arts Commission and the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center.

"As our University Center for Excellence grows, there will be an increased number of workshops in the areas of education and the arts," said Elise McMillan, J.D., Center for Excellence associate director. "It is an exciting time and we are honored to contribute all that we can to help forge relationships for community artists with and without disabilities."

For information on future art programming, contact (1-866) 936-VUKC [8852] or e-mail ucedd@vanderbilt.edu.

Elise McMillan, J.D., is the associate director of the Vanderbilt University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and past director of the Kennedy Center Arts Program.

Courtney L. Evans, M.Div., communications coordinator at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, has a background in theater and performance arts.



JEANNE GAVIGAN PLAYS THE BONGOS.



ARTIST JONATHAN PHILLIPI PAINTS DURING ONE OF THE SESSIONS.



CAMEL SMILE

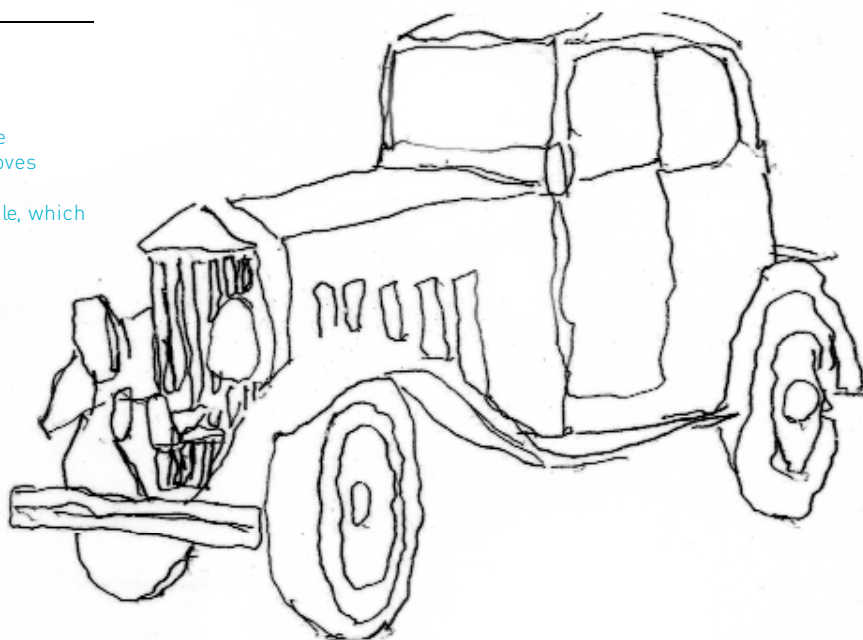
By Mike Soward

Mike Soward of Chattanooga is a photographer with the AIM Center. *Camel Smile* is part of a photography project on dreams.

GRANDPA'S JALOPY

By Jay Steffan

Jay Steffan is an artist with the Creative Expressions Studio in Greeneville. He loves comic book drawings, airplanes and automobiles, and creates on a light table, which helps him see what he is drawing.



Contact Information



This free publication is produced six times a year by the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development and Kent Communications Group. Subscription requests, change of address, and submissions for possible publication should be directed to: Breaking Ground, Council on Developmental Disabilities, 500 Deaderick Street, 13th Floor Suite 1310, Nashville, TN 37243. **PHONE:** 615-532-6615. **E-MAIL:** breakingground@vanderbilt.edu.

Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities Grant Number 1-03999-1-0. Authorization Number 339371, July 2001. 5,600 copies. This public document was promulgated at a cost of \$.46 per copy.

The Story of CRABBY AND POCKETS

BY RAY AMENTROUT

Not very long ago there lived a great boxing champion named Crabby MacDaniels. He was a BIG man! Crabby MacDaniels was feared throughout the county and anyone who crossed his path was very intimidated. Crabby knew his reputation and used it to his advantage. Crabby MacDaniels was a BULLY. Year after year at the annual boxing competition Crabby would win because no one would ever sign up to fight him. Not even the cash prize would draw in any opponents.

Pockets McDougall was a very hard working fellow who worked three jobs to support his wife and children. Pockets was also very kind, generous and humble. One day, while walking home from work, young Pockets McDougall came across the sign for the annual boxing tournament. Pockets often spent nights in bed dreaming of being a boxing champion. Pockets was a small man and never thought he would have a chance to get inside the ring. He read of the cash prize and immediately thought of how the money would help out his family. Pockets tore the flier from the window and went to the community gym and entered the competition. Even though he was certain he wouldn't win, Pockets decided to give it a try. This was his chance.

Pockets ran home as fast as he could to tell his wife and kids about the boxing competition. When his wife heard what he had done, she shrieked in horror.

"Pockets, you can't possibly be in this boxing tournament!" she cried. "You'll get clobbered by that ferocious Crabby MacDaniels."

"Crabby MacWho?" Pockets asked.

"Crabby MacDaniels," she replied, "the biggest and baddest boxer EVER! He has never been beaten and I hear he is 7 feet tall and has muscles bigger than bowling balls."

Pockets' heart dropped to his feet. He wondered what he had gotten himself into. He then thought of how he had always dreamed of being a boxing champion. Pockets felt that he MUST give it a try.

"Well dear, even if I lose and I do get clobbered, at least I tried," said Pockets.

Pockets trained for weeks before the boxing competition. He lifted weights during his lunch breaks, ran to and from his jobs and jumped rope 'til the wee hours of the morning.

The day of the competition finally came. Pockets climbed into the ring while onlookers stared and whispered in amazement.

"I can't believe that tiny fellow is gonna fight Crabby MacDaniels," said one man.

"He will be annihilated," said another.

Pockets felt a lump in his throat. He wanted to back out. I won't do it, he thought to himself and he swallowed as he watched the gargantuan boxer, Crabby MacDaniels, enter the ring.

"Who do you think you are, you little weasel?" Crabby roared. "Do you really think a shrimp such as yourself can win against me, the GREAT Crabby MacDaniels?"

Pockets stood there and didn't blink. He placed his gloves on his hands and stepped forward. Crabby did the same. The referee brought them to the center of the ring and the beautiful young lady walked by with the "Round 1" sign above her head.

The bell rang. Crabby lunged towards Pockets and Pockets threw a quick punch right into Crabby's face. Crabby fell to the floor. The referee examined Crabby, then turned to the onlookers and announced, "KNOCK OUT!" Pockets was amazed. Pockets had actually beaten the biggest, baddest boxer in the county. The crowd rushed into the ring and carried the new boxing champion out into the streets to celebrate. Crabby awoke and snuck out and was never heard from again.

Ray Armentrout lives in Greeneville and has been acting and writing for several years, and is working on turning *The Story of Crabby and Pockets* into a script. Mr. Armentrout is also an avid gardener.

PROGRESS & EXPRESS:

TBI SURVIVORS ENHANCE THEIR COMMUNITY IN CHATTANOOGA BY LIZZY HOCKINSON

“The mind GROWS by what it feeds on.”- Josiah G. Holland

Some people say artists are skilled professionals who are talented in creating things of beauty. But you don't have to be a professional to gain the benefit of what art has to offer. In our program, we learned that an artist can be a person whose only concern in creating art is the process and not the product, and this is where most growth takes place.

“Progress and Express,” sponsored by Unum Provident, is a program that I facilitated for an internship project for the City of Chattanooga Department of Therapeutic Recreation. The program offered minimal boundaries in expression by exploring the arts and utilization as a therapeutic modality.

The participants were from the community entry program at Siskin Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation and the Chattanooga Area Brain Injury Association, and all are brain injury survivors. Although each person is different, they fight everyday to overcome challenges such as aphasia (loss for words), memory loss, mobility impairment, headaches, mood swings, fear, and depression. This program was designed to provide them with the opportunity to share their personal stories with the general public, and to inspire viewers, who will hopefully relate to each person's unique message.

I began the program by demonstrating different types of expressive art. We did various activities, such as Tape Art, visiting the Hunter Museum of American Art, checking out art books from the city library,

creative writing, and even drawing with our eyes closed. To accommodate numerous challenges, I used various techniques.

For memory loss, each participant was given a sketchbook to draw what they liked while visiting the museum, and the library books were pulled out during each session to remind participants of what kind of art they were interested in. For issues like aphasia, I created detailed worksheets for sessions that provided the attendees with a list of

words and phrases to choose from.

Planning and implementing small expressive art projects was imperative to getting the participants comfortable with art and their abilities, and ready to start on their final paintings. The biggest challenge of the program was working with each artist to get what was going on inside out onto the large surface of the plywood. This is when the Siskin staff, and especially artist-in-residence, Olive B. “Lolly” Durant, really





LOLLY DURANT AND LIZZY HOCKINSON

stepped in to keep the program moving forward. We could not have done it without their dedication and commitment.

Each artist was encouraged to focus on the theme of who they once were, who they are now, and who they strive to be. They were directed towards illustrating their progress. The process concentrated on their strengths. All weaknesses were set aside.

During the program, I found that a laissez-faire leadership style was a good way to approach the artists and the overall project. Art is expressive; the only way to let people truly express themselves is to provide minimal limitations. Originally, the program was scheduled to last only six weeks, but I discovered that providing a strict time limit only fueled distraction and anxiety. The artists seemed to worry more about the product when time limits were discussed.

We also reached a compromise in the area of mural design. Since all individuals are different, all feel more confident in different ways. I had a few artists who didn't like the idea of painting, but were more comfortable expressing themselves with writing. Letting them know that words could be incorporated into their visual arts helped them stay motivated to paint. They agreed to paint the background, but the real art was going to be within the words they created to go on top.

Although the paintings were completed, the final product was not. Each artist was



expected to create an "artist's statement" to accompany their art. To assist with this, I created a worksheet that provided multiple-choice questions for the participants to answer. The questions focused on how they acquired their brain injury, what they learned from it, as well as how their art reflects their story. These mural descriptions were hung next to each painting with the purpose of allowing the viewer insight into the lives of the artist. With this, we hope to inspire the general public, and to strive for appreciation as being people first, instead of being looked at as just someone with a disability.

Once the mural was hung, a ceremony was held to celebrate the accomplishments of everyone involved. The majority of participants showed up to face the media, along with the support of their families and friends. It was amazing to see everyone who attended; huge support from the community demonstrated to us that we were doing a good thing.

Rob Lawrence, Siskin Rehabilitation Hospital's community re-entry specialist, said it best: "So often persons with physical or emotional challenges are stigmatized and the focus is on what they can not do. These creations remind them and the community that they are capable of achieving greatness and beauty...given time, encouragement, and a little assistance."

When looking at the issues that the artists shared with each other, one cannot help but see that there are other people who have

varying disabilities that deal with those same issues every day. This program can be replicated for different populations and produce positive results. I believe everyone has a story. This is a good way to share it.

Lizzy Hockinson is therapeutic recreation assistant with the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Chattanooga.

ME OH ME By Kelly Sanders

Me Oh Me, judged by injury
not my ability.

Please oh Please
do not Judge Me,
offer me opportunity.

By the By & Along the way
came a chance for me to be
Part of a new Day.

Now in college, soon to graduate
my persona now is met with Awe "wow"
not Aw "injury"

Me oh Me, soon to be judged by my ability,
not my injury.
Thank You Partners in Policymaking
for being REAL to me.

Kelly Sanders is a 1997 Survivor of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), an 04-05 Partners in Policymaking™ graduate and a senior at MTSU seeking a degree as a recreation therapist. She can be reached via e-mail at sks2v@mtsu.edu.

LEAVING THE BOX

BY ANGELA BRAACH

I have lived in a box most of my life because of fear. A rather safe and secure place; I usually know what to expect—solid walls, a lid, the same shape. I feel happy here. Well, maybe not happy. Safe! Yes, safe from the possibility of ever removing the lid. I'm safe from the world's problems!

Once someone nudged my box and the lid was knocked off. I heard noises that sounded interesting, yet not enough to leave the comfort of my world. I would have to take the chance that I might not be able to return to this, my safe place. At least I thought it was safe.

Not too long ago, I leaned on the edge of my box to hear noises outside and found myself intrigued by the sounds on the other side. I became so thoughtless that I shifted my weight too much; my safe haven began to tip and landed with the lid several feet away. My box had fallen, my cover was gone and, without going into a lot of emotional details, it was a rotten day.

This was the moment I decided that I needed to let someone in my box. I asked an outside person in, while patching up my box, to assist with repairs. My home wasn't quite the same now; it certainly didn't feel as secure. I showed the guest my once splendid home. She seemed to notice the walls first; she mentioned they were somewhat drab. I told her that I knew they were a bit dull but they had been very useful over the last few years and frankly I liked them just the way they were. I didn't want walls that would overstimulate me and disrupt my equilibrium. The very idea, drab!

As she assessed the damage to my house, she politely informed me that she would not assist me in repairing the roof. She didn't seem concerned about my protection in the least. She even suggested that I leave it off and take inventory of all the limitless dreams I might have for myself. At this point she made a suggestion, no maybe more of a hint, that I might eventually leave this place.

No way! I told her. I'll never leave! This is my refuge! She quickly reminded me that, with an incorrect shift in weight, my refuge had failed me. I reminded her that in the future I would be much more careful and would certainly avoid the weak areas so as to never experience tumbling again. Thankfully, she was patient with me as I continued to explain, over and over again, why I needed to be in this safe environment.

During each visit, she would do the most destructive thing and poke a hole through the wall of my house. I began to notice light streaming through my box once she left. I asked her about this odd behavior she exhibited and she said that it was to make my life more interesting, you know, so the walls would not appear so dull. Over time there were numerous holes and before I knew it, I too was making openings in the walls.

As time went by, I began to stare out of the holes. After a while, the gaps became so numerous the walls disappeared. I was exposed to the world. I was scared, yet I felt a drive in me not to let others notice my panic so I pretended that I wasn't frightened. I pretended that I was healthy, strong and safe. During these days of pretending, I started to interact with people around me and I went places I had never been before.

One day I heard this delightful sound and I began to search high and low. The melody was so touching to my ear that I was impelled to find the source. After much searching, I realized the noise was so close that I could move my arms up and touch the vocal cords of the person making this lovely tune, which I later discovered was a laugh. When I reached up to touch the vibration of the neck, I felt the warmth of my own hands. I was laughing! It was joyous, it was me, and it was real! After a time of pretending, a wonderful realization entered my head, that my life was more than existing. To my astonishment, I was not afraid anymore of small silly things or even some of the more dreadful thoughts that sometimes enter everyone's mind at some point. I was on the outside of my box, outside of my perceived safety. I am taking more risks now than ever before and it feels great!

Sometimes I look at it, the former home, the box; although it is tattered I still get a glimpse of it. I must admit I grieve for it occasionally. The safe and predictable walls, the consistency of the days, however, I haven't gone back, and God help me I never will. Yet, if I do, I know that I have acquired ways to combat those walls and demand that they come down.

Angela Braach is a graduate of the 05-06 Partners in Policymaking™ Leadership Institute. She is currently enjoying working in ministry at her church, as well as staying at home with her three children.

MY MOM By Laura Turnbo

I feel my mom hug me every night.
 I feel comfortable when she puts the blanket on me and tells me goodnight.
 I feel mom gently wake me every morning.
 I'm lucky because I know she loves me.
 I feel happy when my mom shows up early from work.
 I feel sad when my mom feels sad because I don't want her to hurt.
 I feel mad when my mom punishes me, but I know it's for my good.

I see mom change her hair color because she hates her gray, but mom
 looks pretty anytime anywhere.
 My mom loves to sleep on the couch.
 She likes to chat and she likes to hug.

She cooks and cleans the house and takes good care of my brother and me.
 She is the best mom in the world.

I love to smell my mom's hair after she washes it.
 My mom smells so good, I can't describe it, but I know it is her.

I hear with my eyes.
 Words are on my hands.
 Thoughts fly with movements and she understands.

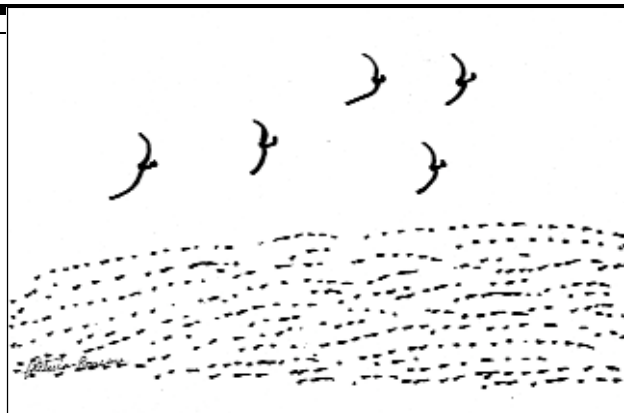
Thanks Mom!
 Love, Laura

Laura Turnbo is an independent, energetic, and outgoing, 15-year-old girl who loves life. She will be in the 10th grade at Tennessee School for the Deaf this Fall. She has learned to be a self-advocate at an early age (she chose to go to TSD for high school). She wants to teach Kindergarten someday. Ms. Turnbo wrote this poem in the 8th grade and gave it to her mother at her graduation from Rockvale Elementary School.

IF I WAS A BUCKET OF RED PAINT

I would splatter all over the place.
 I would throw myself on the wall.
 I would paint a house.

– Patricia Brawner



UNTITLED

By Patricia Brawner

Patricia Brawner is a poet and artist with Pacesetters in Cookeville. Her piece is part of a collection entitled *The Lists*, edited by Merritt Ireland and Wayne Hogan.

GARDEN

BY KEN MULLER

It was a pleasure to turn earth in Will's garden. He had coaxed out the rocks thirty years earlier and had turned the soil double to 18 inches. Each year he spaded the top spread, even if intending to plant a small patch. I paced it off – twenty-eight by fourteen feet. "Enough to support four families in greens and fresh," he noted, "as well we did during the thirties. Now, I just grow enough for the Missus and me seeing as how folks are accustom to store-bought flavor." I knew this wasn't true, as he was always giving bags of tomatoes, zucchini and pole-beans to 'widow-ladies' around the block. "Think I'll dig out those worthless berries, though," he mused – chin on hoe handle. This was the same threat he made every year, I learned. He believed it made their thorns grow smaller and the berries thicker. Didn't know anything about this kind of 'talking to your garden'. Seemed to work, though.

"Did you ever use a tiller?" I ventured, already unable to keep up with his hoeing pace. He knew I meant a gas-powered thing and not one of the old mule-drawn, beautiful five-blade instruments – which was a given he had.

"Nope! Nuthin' against them except that they stink when you fire them up, and if you can't smell the turning earth, how are you going to know what compost and fertilizer to add?" Old Will asked a lot of questions I couldn't even begin to answer. As he didn't return to his whistling, I knew some other thought was perking around under his massive shock of brilliant white hair. His thinking wasn't slowed by being eighty years my senior, just his quiet way – like a good carpenter measuring twice and cutting once. He never adjusted his speech to account for my youth, though; and there was a dictionary on the back porch, just in case. He didn't use special or technical words just for me either – just spoke as he did to everyone. He tilled his mind the same way

as his garden, and he wasn't about to repeat himself; so pay attention. I did, and others didn't.

"Folks say that tillers save time, which they rightly do, if you don't count fixing, cleaning and running for gas. So, when I see a man use tiller on a small patch of ground, I take stock of what he does with the time saved. If he uses that time for education or helping other folk, then I would grant that something is gained. If it only makes more time for golf or watching the idiot box, then I think he'd be better off with a shovel."

"You are not just talking about working a garden, are you?" I queried sweatingly – knowing he wouldn't answer if I quit spading. He chuckled – always delightful because it came out in two tones; one low and from the ribs, the other a pleasant wheeze – like wind in cedar branches. He reached up and plucked a pear from an offering branch. Then a jack-knife behaved and carved a single swirl of peel – round and around like a lathe. Then he stuck the blade in a stump – signal that it was OK for me to stop and join him. My effort was ugly, but the juice just as sweet as his. He leaned back against a fork in the tree and the slight breeze gave a rocking motion to his stand. I thought maybe he was going to doze off. I sat on the stump, but didn't move. Patience didn't come by me easily, but with Will it usually paid off. So I counted butterflies, instead of scratching.

"The right way of thinking got lost during the wars, I think. There was a time when a man might look at your garden, or how you had raised your kids, or the position you took at the town meeting, and say, 'You hold some values I'd like to appreciate. Tell me what you think about philosophy and politics and keeping a wife for sixty years.' He might even get around to asking how I choose to pray, but that would come after he took full measure of how I treated my mother, and

my dog." This caught my interest. As kids, we were taught never to talk about money, politics, sex or religion; but I was old enough to know that those were the only subjects worth talking about. Later I was to learn that the wisdom is to never 'argue' about these things. I guess Will was saying that if you get the measure of a man first, you never have to argue – but can discuss anything, or at least tell stories.

"Now-a-days, a man blurts out that he is a Republican, or a Reverend, or a Lawyer, a Catholic or an Englishman – and this is supposed to convey some description of values, education and spirituality as a basis of communication. All it can do is lead to argument! A man ought to keep counsel and show his worth before offering an opinion. Didn't Christ say something about 'living your sermon, not speaking it?' By any balance, a man who claims to be something establishes a standard against which he wishes to be measured – and usually fails at it. People are big on saying, 'I'm a Christian' or 'I'm Democrat' – whatever. Then they go out and try to force other people to be and think what they fail to do everyday. The higher you set your ladder, the greater the distance to the ground, and if that ground is gravel instead of solid rock – or slippery instead of tested firm, well ..."

He had fetched some baskets from the rafters of his shed, and I took this as a clue to drag the ladder to the pear tree and select a proper set for the picking. "Now, if before you climb into politics and religion," he continued, "you make sure to have a trusted friend there to hold and anchor ..."

"But we are taught to trust our teachers and priests and civic leaders," I protested a bit.

"Then get one of them to hold this rickety ladder for you!"

I don't know why he spent so much time with me!

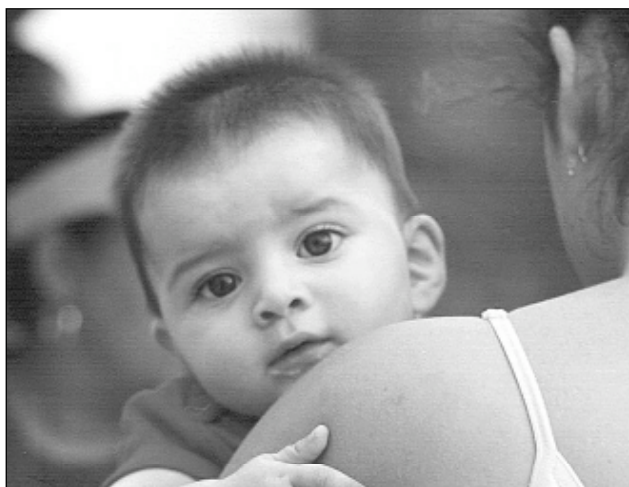
Ken Muller is a Viet Nam veteran with a disability living in Knoxville.

LOOK THROUGH MY EYES

By Kaitlyn Cherry

Maybe you will understand if you look through my eyes.
 You say I have a bad attitude and I continuously wonder why.
 You think you can just push me around.
 But you'll remember how you treated me when the tables turn around.
 When people scowl at you for saying hi.
 Take a look through my eyes then ask yourself why.
 Why you treated me like dirt.
 Why you said things, things that really hurt.
 If only people could look through my eyes.
 Maybe then they'd see why.
 I'm not mean.
 I'm just a teen.
 I'm not cold.
 I just tend to be very bold.
 Yeah I'm sarcastic.
 But at least my personality's not plastic.
 I don't have to pick at others to feel secure.
 Because my thoughts and feelings are pure.
 Yet you still keep asking why.
 Like I said take a long look through my eyes.

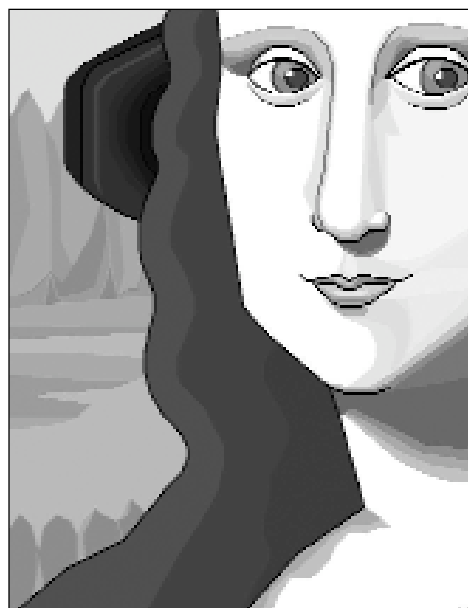
Kaitlyn Cherry has been blind since she was nine. She is a junior at Lincoln County High School in Fayetteville and is working toward going to college and becoming a veterinarian. She is also a graduate of the 2006 Tennessee Youth Leadership Forum.



BABY AT FESTIVAL

By Christy Wells-Reece

Christy Wells-Reece lives in Cleveland and is a graduate of the 00-01 Partners in Policymaking™ class. Ms. Wells-Reece also presents workshops on photography for the Tennessee Youth Leadership Forum.



MONA

By Erin Brady Worsham

Erin Brady Worsham is a Nashville artist, writer and speaker, and a graduate of the 01-02 Partners in Policymaking™ class. Her work has exhibited internationally. Most recently, she participated in the Chicago Disability Arts and Culture Festival in April. Her one-woman show, "Artist Always," continues to tour the country. Ms. Worsham was a featured speaker at the 2006 National Right to Life Convention in June.

GOODNIGHT FIREFLY

By Jessica Lawhorn

Good night firefly tomorrow the world will turn right on its axis
 And you'll be able to shine your light
 Shine your light for the world to see
 But for tonight just sleep
 Tomorrow the world will want to
 meet you
 There will be new challenges to face
 In a world filled with confusion
 And love for the human race
 Human race

Jessica Lawhorn is a 29-year-old Knoxville native and a graduate of the University of Tennessee and the 04-05 Partners in Policymaking™ class.

WEST TENNESSEE THEATER TROUPE

PUTS PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CENTER STAGE BY NED ANDREW SOLOMON

This past April 27th, an auditorium full of folks on the beautiful Rhodes College campus in Memphis were thoroughly entertained by a talented cast of 15. The original play, written by the director, Mary Claire Giffin, was *Survivor Memphis: Mud Island—Will They Survive Without TennCare?* The actors and actresses, who, over the course of the evening dished out equal helpings of humorous insights, political zingers and thought-provoking messages about the State's TennCare disenrollment decisions, hailed from the Center Stage theater troupe, comprised of members of the Memphis Center for Independent Living's Rockers and Rollers and PALs (Partners Accessing Life) groups.

This was not the first performance from this crew. Center Stage—led and coordinated by Ms. Giffin—puts on two shows a year, in the Spring and Fall. "One of the sole purposes for Center Stage is to 'Educate through Art,'" says Ms. Giffin. "This education filters into all aspects of the performance. The actors and actresses learn confidence, ability, and how to access and expand upon their own personal creativities. The college has made itself more aware and accessible to individuals with disabilities due to the frequent presence of the performers. The community is able to learn about and gain respect for individuals with disabilities through their individual performances and the content of the play itself. And the things that I have learned and continue to learn due to my involvement in these performances are immeasurable."



Although Ms. Giffin is in charge and writes the plays, the productions represent a true team effort of actors, family members of those actors, and individuals from the Memphis community at large, many of whom donate lots of time, energy and dollars to the cause. "There are several volunteers that have participated throughout the years," says Ms. Giffin. "Many are recruited from Rhodes through the Kinney Community Service program, and others are friends of either myself or the cast members. Rhodes provides the majority of the monetary funds for the performances through the Kinney program, and there are other people who donate, both monetary and in-kind, to the program from the Memphis Center for Independent Living, the play participants and their families, and, of course, my wonderful and supportive family."

The Center Stage thespians practice every Sunday for a semester, and Ms. Giffin spends the Saturday before these rehearsals preparing for the next day's work. Ms. Giffin volunteers her time and has been involved with the Center Stage productions for six years, while juggling a college education and a full-time job. "Just like with anything else in your life that you enjoy, you make time," says Ms. Giffin.

The three weeks prior to the performances are especially busy. "The play becomes my life," says Ms. Giffin. "Every spare minute I have is dedicated to extra rehearsals, phone calls, e-mails, publications, props, and reservations. But we have to give credit where credit is due. The actors and actresses in Center Stage are the ones who practice over and over and make the performance such a success."

The actors' ownership in the final product is enhanced by the fact that the play's topic is determined by the whole ensemble. "The performers and I sit down together and decide on the topic for the play," explains Ms. Giffin. "This is truly an interesting session to see."

There are about 20-25 people in a room all sharing ideas, and we all try to find a way to fuse them together. We decide on what subject to perform about first—like the TennCare cuts—and secondly we decide our theme and setting. After this has been established and agreed upon by the group, I take this information home and then the plot, the characters, the details, and the background come to me throughout the week. The next practice, we have the play. Don't ask me, but somehow, it works! You can find inspiration in so many places."

Ms. Giffin's passion for this kind of work is immediately evident, and it was born early in her life. "When I was in daycare around the age of 3 or 4, I was assigned as the 'Teacher's Helper' for the children who had disabilities at the school," says Ms. Giffin. "Basically, I translated to the teachers what my friends wanted. I loved doing it. I remember feeling so privileged that they wanted me to be a part of their class and accepted me into their classroom. The thing here is, to me, my friends there were not different than anyone else."

Throughout her life, that positive, inclusive attitude has been the same, just in different settings: school, dance, theater, church, and especially with her family, having grown up with an aunt and an uncle with disabilities.

Ms. Giffin has big dreams for Center Stage. Short range, she hopes Center Stage will be able to continue performing and attracting a new generation of audience members from the surrounding community. Long range, she is hoping for more funding to possibly take this show on the road—to schools, clubs and other organizations. Most importantly, she wants to spread the word that all individuals who wish to participate are welcome. "Anyone can be a volunteer or actor, whether they have a disability or not," says Ms. Giffin. "We are always open to new ideas and topics, so if you have them, please share them with us. Hope to see everyone at our next performance!"

Ned Andrew Solomon is director of the Partners In Policymaking™ program of the Council of Developmental Disabilities.



SKYLAR AND LANESHIA GONNA BE IN MY HEART FOREVER

By Lunar Gatewood

Nu-Nu, I bet you didn't know
You got your name
When me and your mom
Put our names together

I look at the both of you
As my beautiful models
I'll teach you right from wrong
And be a perfect role model

I see you playing together in the park
It touches my heart
Your teacher's praise ya'll
'Cause ya'll so smart

Things didn't work out
With me and your mom,
But I promise to keep you
Away from harm

I'll be there for the both of you
Just stick out your arms...

Yes sir, I love my kids!

All the while
When I see them smile
I get a lump in my throat
I'm going to love forever
They know, I hope

If not
I'll tell them so

School girls
I'll give them the world
Shining Bright
Just like a Pearl.

Never be ashamed to ask for help
Don't try to fit in
Be yourself

I wish both of you the best
Don't settle for nothing less
Than Success

Here's my shoulder
If you need to rest

August 11th and July 19th
The world was blessed
I love my kids more than life itself
I'll give my life so they can live
No need to guess
Skylar, when I talked to you
On the phone Last Night
It was so right
I love how mannerable you were
And so polite

Never wanna see you sad
Wanna make you happy
I love your long thick hair
Like your daddy

So when I lay down to sleep, Lord,
Could you bless me?
That I could be the best father
That anybody could be?

And bless my children
And let us be a family
May they live long
And give the whole world peace

AMEN

Lunar Gatewood lives in Chattanooga.



SEASIDE

By Christy Wells-Reece

See biosketch on page 13.

HOUSE

By Juanita Rogers

Do you remember your grandparents house?
Is 95 years old yet I dream of him
The orange slices, double colas and old stairs.
His gentle touch
Clean smell
And sweet prayers.
But most of all, Loving Me.

Juanita Rogers of Chattanooga is a photographer with the AIM Center.



MEMBERSHIP AND STAFF

COUNCIL CHAIRPERSONS

Andrea L. Cooper, Chair
Joyce Sievers, Vice Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Michael W. Boyd, Cookeville
Stephanie Brewer Cook, Knoxville
Barron A. Garrett, McMinnville
Mary Dale Greene, Columbia
Nancy Hardin, Dyersburg
Angela Hazlehurst, Jackson
Pamela Huber, Kingsport
Sue Lovlace, Centerville
June Mangum, Memphis
Richard Moore, J.D., Brentwood
Alan Muir, Knoxville
Randy Oliver, Jackson
John D. Piver, Gray
Debbie Riffle, Humboldt
Steven Sheegog, Memphis

Rebecca Smith, McMinnville
Van Veller, Signal Mountain
Marsha Wilson, Antioch

STATE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Philip Wagster
Department of Human Services,
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Joseph E. Fisher
Department of Education,
Division of Special Education
Stephen H. Norris
Department of Finance and
Administration,
Division of Mental Retardation Services
Ted R. Fellman
Tennessee Housing Development Agency

Virginia Trotter Betts
Department of Mental Health and
Developmental Disabilities
Richard Kennedy
Commission on Children and Youth
Nancy C. Peace
Commission on Aging and Disability
Theadora Pinnock
Department of Health,
Maternal and Child Health
Karen M. Carouthers
Bureau of TennCare

UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE REPRESENTATIVES

Frederick Palmer
UT Center for Health Services
Elisabeth Dykens
Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for
Research on Human Development

PROTECTION & ADVOCACY

Shirley Shea
Disability Law & Advocacy Center
of Tennessee

COUNCIL STAFF

Wanda Willis, Executive Director
Errol Elstain, Planning Coordinator
Mildred Sparkman, Administrative
Secretary
Alicia A. Cone, Coordinator, Project
Research and Development
Lynette Swinford, Fiscal Manager
Ned Solomon, Director, Partners in
Policymaking™ Leadership Institute
William Edington, Legislative and Public
Policy Coordinator
JoEllen Fowler, Administrative Assistant



IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY- GOD BLESS US

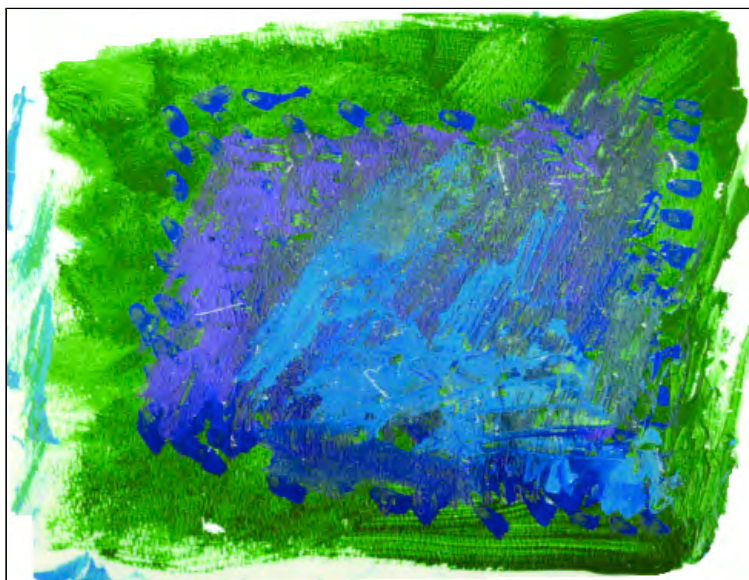
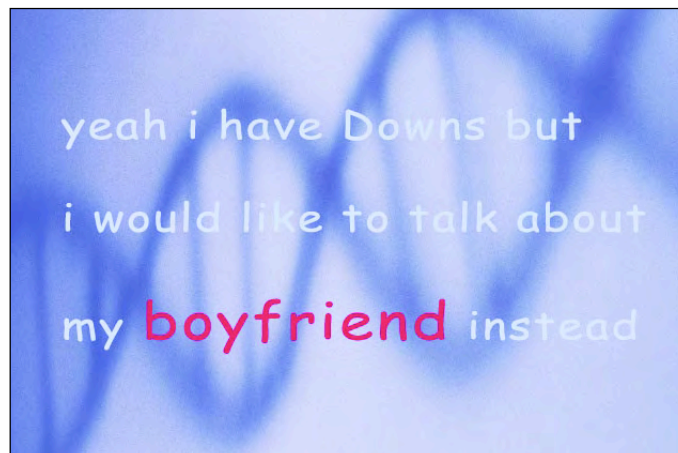
By Bobbie Bartleson

Bobbie Bartleson lives in Jearoldstown. She has entered several art projects in various contests.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

By Melissa Fortson

Melissa Fortson lives in Nashville. She is program coordinator and information & referral specialist with Tennessee Disability Pathfinder. Her "word pictures" feature observations by and about people with disabilities.



INNER SANCTUM

By James Evans

James Evans is an artist with the Creative Expressions Studio in Greeneville. Mr. Evans is an eager artist who creates with thoughtfulness and determination and is not afraid to try new mediums. *Inner Sanctum* was a finalist in the People's Choice Award at this year's Creative Expressions & Friends Art Show.



UNTITLED

By La Tanya Kim Battle

La Tanya Kim Battle is a native Nashvillian who enjoys writing, drawing and music. She has a bi-weekly column in *Nashville Pride*, an African-American weekly newspaper.



MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS I, '06

By Grace Goad

Grace Walker Goad, who has autism, attends H.G. Hill Middle School in Nashville. She has been creating art since age four, and her work has been shown locally and nationally.

SPECIAL GUEST OF THE SCW

By David S. Pointer

– For David Weyand and
the Matthew Butler Foundation

I was at 328
Performance Hall
When The Screamin
Cheetah Wheelies
Coauthored more
Than an electrified
Evening of acceptance
With a differently abled

Guest star gettin-with-it
On a star packed stage
While sliding in clean
Like Cool Papa Bell
Bringing rockumentary
Rhythm and moves
Heard around the
Grunge, garage, and
Metal world, so, that
Everybody knew Love
Was *The Color* encasing

This motoring man's
Divine drum and Gibson
Guitar driven dance
Bringing *full participation*
Forward to a packed
Percolating house.

David S. Pointer is author of the poetry chapbook, *Wheelchair Dancer*. He lives in Murfreesboro with his two daughters.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUBMISSION

Due to space limitation, we regret that we are not able to include every submission in the *Breaking Ground* Arts Issue. If your submission is not included, we encourage you to submit again next year. We will keep your submission on file and it may be printed in subsequent issues of *Breaking Ground*, including next year's Arts Issue.



UNTITLED

By Massoud Taj

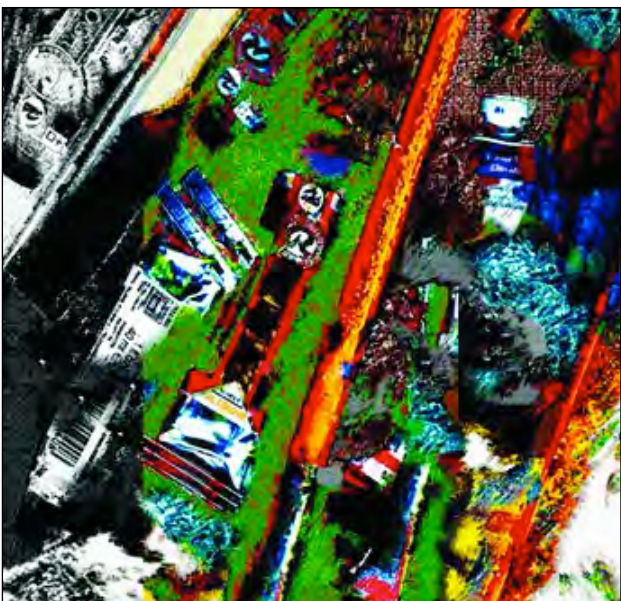
Massoud Taj is one of the founders of Full Circle Art. A visual artist and musician, Mr. Taj represents a number of regional and national artists and musicians. His own artwork has been in many solo and group exhibitions, and he conducts music and art workshops.



MAIGHDEAN MHARS (SEA MAID)

By Daniel Hepburn

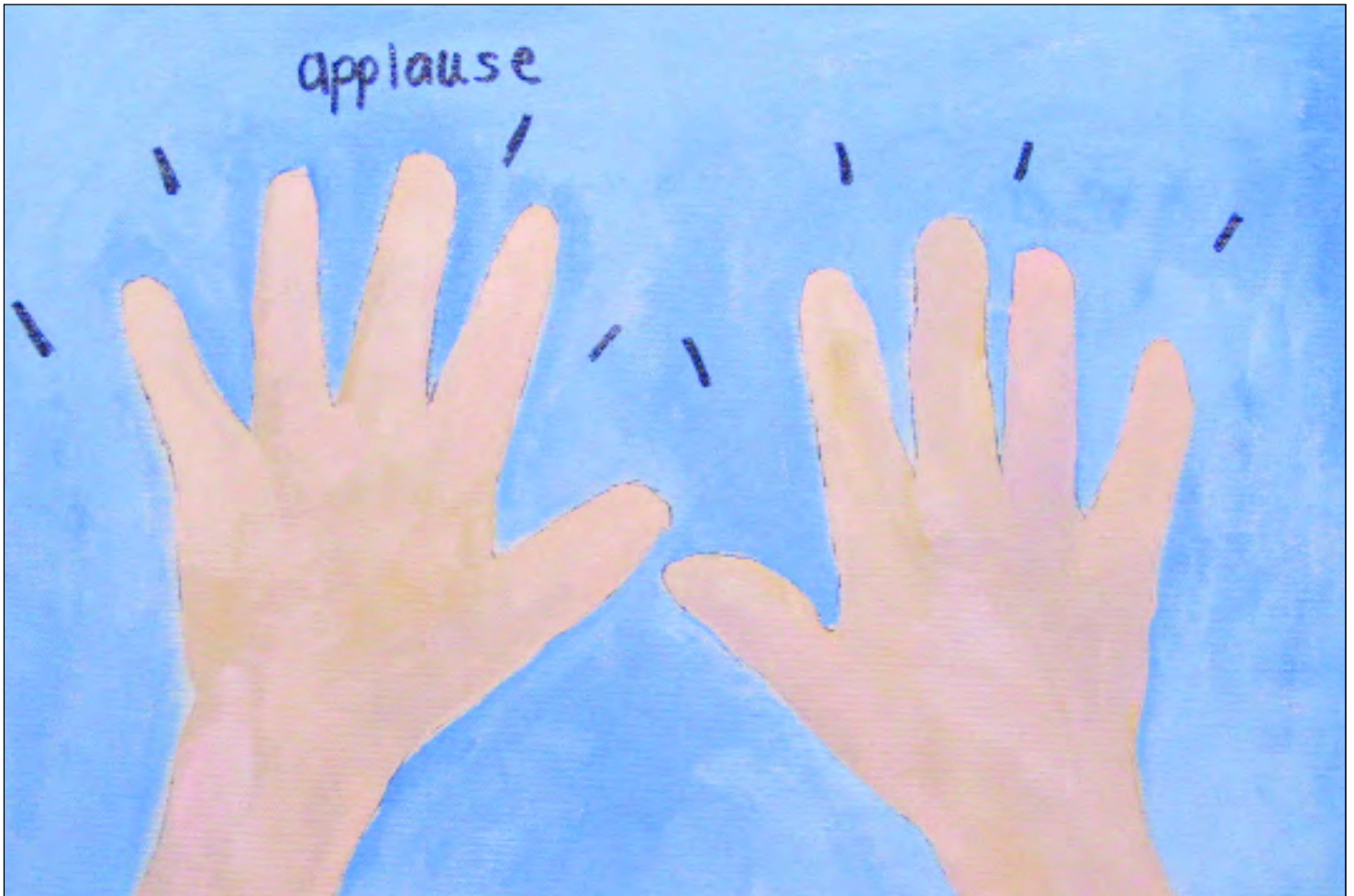
Daniel Hepburn moved to Crossville at the age of five. He is 33 now, and has been painting for 12 years.



UNTITLED

By Ken McBroom

SEE De'VIA Art Exhibit article, page 4.



APPLAUSE

By Matt Klyatta, who is nine years old and lives in Old Hickory.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNCIL, CONTACT THE COUNCIL OFFICE AT The Andrew Jackson Building, 500 Deaderick Street, 13th floor, Suite 1310, Nashville, TN 37243-0228, **TELEPHONE:** 615-532-6615, **TTY:** 615-741-4562, **FAX:** 615-532-6964, **E-MAIL:** tnddc@state.tn.us, **WEB:** www.state.tn.us/cdd

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Vanderbilt Kennedy Center
Peabody Box 40
230 Appleton Place
Nashville, TN 37203

Return Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Nashville, TN
Permit No. 85